

NRCS WEST VIRGINIA QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN FY 2006

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/s/ Ronald L. Hilliard

State Conservationist

12/21/05

Date

**NRCS WEST VIRGINIA QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN
FY 2006**

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to establish oversight, evaluation responsibilities and guidance to ensure that programs, rules, and regulations, as well as the laws and executive orders on which they are based, are being followed and that the intended outcomes are effectively achieved in an efficient manner.

West Virginia empowers all employees to be responsible for quality assurance. All employees are encouraged to be creative and innovative in finding ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of NRCS operations.

Quality assurance activities are conducted continuously to assure an appropriate emphasis on accountability and results. These activities help NRCS identify the need for changes into its operations and policies and when necessary, integrate changes to optimize the use of human, financial and other resources. Oversight activities are used to ensure that all agency activities are conducted in accordance with rules and regulations of the agency's programs and the laws and executive orders on which the rules and regulations are based.

Quality review activities incorporate the following principles:

- Maintain a high level of technical quality
- Ensure an efficient and equitable use of agency resources
- Work within legal authorities
- Maintain a high level of customer satisfaction

Quality reviews recognize achievement or areas where special emphasis is needed in order to bring an issue in alignment with policy and procedure. NRCS line officers at all levels are expected to assimilate review findings and take action to improve performance outcomes.

Quality Assurance Control Activities

A. State Quality Reviews

Administrative Area Reviews are conducted every 3-5 years with a three pronged approach.

1. The ASTC-FO or District Conservationist, with their staff, provide an overview of resource concerns, outreach and civil rights activities, staffing and programmatic needs, issues and barriers. An action plan is developed during the review to address any deficiencies, make recommendations for improvement and to recognize good work.
2. Civil Rights Compliance Review, with participation of a Civil Rights Advisory Committee member, is performed to assist the office meet this critical issue.

3. Quality Reviews by Assistant State Conservationist – Water Resources (ASTC-WR), State Resource Conservationist (SRC), State Conservation Engineer (SCE), and State Soil Scientist (SSS) are for technical adequacy. The ASTC–WR, ASTC–Operations, ASTC–Programs, SRC, SCE, and Assistant State Conservationist–Field Operations (ASTC-FO) quality reviews are conducted for program compliance determination, conservation plan adherence to policy and proper conservation practice installation. (See attached Quality Assurance Review form.)

FY2006 Action Plan for Area and Field Office Appraisals

Action: Area or Field Office Appraisals	Person:	Date Scheduled:	Date Completed:
Area Office Appraisal	ASTC-O	None in FY 2006	
South Area -	ASTC-FO		
Buckeye FO		May	
Huntington FO		April	
West Area -	ASTC-FO		
Glenville FO		2/6-17/2006	
Sistersville FO		11/28-12/9/2005	
Cross Lanes FO		7/10-21/2006	
Great Kanawha RC&D		5/15-19/2006	
East Area -	ASTC-FO		
Romney FO			
Philippi FO			
Wes-Mon-Ty RC&D			

FY2006 Action Plan for Civil Rights Reviews

Civil Rights Compliance Reviews will be done during the Field Office Appraisals.

Action: Civil Rights Appraisals	Person:	Date Scheduled:	Date Completed:
South Area -	ASTC-FO/ CRAC Rep.		
Buckeye FO		May	
Huntington FO		April	
West Area -	ASTC-FO/ CRAC Rep.		
Glenville FO		2/6-17/2006	
Cross Lanes FO		11/28-12/9/2005	
Great Kanawha RC&D		7/10-21/2006	
Sistersville FO		5/15-19/2006	
East Area -	ASTC-FO / CRAC Rep.		
Romney FO			
Philippi FO			
Wes-Mon-Ty RC&D			

B. Quality Checks

The ASTC-FO and area staff as appropriate will review field office planning and application throughout the year for adequacy during technical visits. The ASTC-FO may request assistance from appropriate state staff as needed. An annual summary, including status and action needed, will be forwarded to the Assistant State Conservationist for Operations (ASTC-O) by **December 31, 2006.**

FY2006 Action Plan for Field Engineering Quality Checks

Action:	Person:	Date Completed:
Engineering Quality Checks		
South Area Field Offices: All Field Offices in the Area	ASTC-FO	
West Area Field Offices: All Field Offices in the Area	ASTC-FO	
East Area Field Offices: All Field Offices in the Area	ASTC-FO	

FY2006 Action Plan for Field Agronomic Quality Checks

Action:	Person:	Date Completed:
Agronomic Quality Checks		
South Area Field Offices: All Field Offices in the Area	ASTC-FO	
West Area Field Offices: All Field Offices in the Area	ASTC-FO	
East Area Field Offices: All Field Offices in the Area	ASTC-FO	

C. Conservation Planning Review

FY 2006 – As part of Conservation Planning certification, all certified field employees will submit conservation plans and documentation of their prior approved conservation planning training credits, as required by policy in [GM180, Part 409](#) & [WV Amend. 1, July 2003](#). The plans will be evaluated by a line officer or designated NRCS official to determine if they are in accordance with the National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH) and the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). The evaluation will include a review of the conservation plan(s), review of alternatives provided to the client, site review when necessary, and a visit with the landowner when appropriate. This will be documented on form “Conservation Plan Evaluation Form”. For Technical Service Providers, the State Resource Conservationist will evaluate the conservation plans. The reviewing official will make their recommendation to

the State Conservationist on adequacy of the plan(s) and the ability of the planner to meet planning criteria, by January 15 of each year.

FY2006 Action Plan for Field Conservation Plan Certification Review

Action: Certified Conservation Planner Review	Person:	Date Completed:
South Area Field Offices: All Field Offices in the Area	ASTC-FO	
West Area Field Offices: All Field Offices in the Area	ASTC-FO	
East Area Field Offices: All Field Offices in the Area	ASTC-FO	
Technical Service Providers Quality Check of conservation planning.	SRC	

Conservation Programs and Other Program Reviews

Programs subject to this review:

- 1) EQIP – 5% sample per area to check conservation planning and practice application
- 2) AMA- 5% sample per area to check conservation planning and practice application
- 3) SWCA- 5% sample per area to check conservation planning and practice application
- 4) WRP – Review one completed easement to assure compliance
- 5) WHIP – 5% sample of WHIP participants, WHIP plans and contracts
- 6) CRP – Review one new contract
- 7) CR – Civil Rights Compliance Review of program delivery and the diversity of program participants
- 8) FIP – Review administration of FIP by State Office
- 9) NRI – To assure that the quality of data meets state and national guidelines
- 10) FRPP – Review 5% of all applications and 5% of all funded proposals to assure equal access to citizens and program compliance
- 11) GRP – Review one new contract to check conservation planning.
- 12) PL-534 and PL566 (Land Treatment Measures) – 5% sample per area to check conservation planning and practice application.
- 13) CSP - 5% sample per watershed to check conservation stewardship plan

2006 Action Plan for Conservation Programs and Other Program Reviews

Action: Program Reviews	Person:	Completion Date:
1. EQIP Review	ASTC-P	
2. AMA Review	ASTC-P	
3. SWCA Review	ASTC-P	
4. WRP Review	ASTC-P	
5. WHIP Review	ASTC-P	
6. Civil Rights Diversity of Program Participants	ASTC-O, ASTC-P, ASTC-FO (all)	
7. Forestry Incentives Program	SRC	
8. FRPP Review	ASTC-FO East, ASTC-P	
9. GRP Review	ASTC-P	
10. CRP	ASTC-P	
11. PL-534 (Land Treatment)	ASTC-WR	
12. PL-566 (Land Treatment)	ASTC-WR	
13. CSP Review	ASTC-P	

D. Program Compliance

- 1) Annual Contract Reviews (NRCS-CPA-13, dated 4/2005) conducted by field staff to assure landowner compliance with AMA, SWCA, EQIP, CRP, CSP, and WHIP and other contracts in order to assure evaluation of practices and determination of additional needs.
- 2) Annual Easement Monitoring of WRP, GRP and FRPP will be completed on all contracts to assure landowner compliance with restoration plans and easement boundaries.
- 3) Each ASTC-FO will appoint a person to assist field and state office staff with quality assurance.
- 4) As part of the State Quality Assurance Plan, the State office staff will review annual contract reviews done by the field staff and ensure that responsibilities required by the 1985 Act, as amended, are carried out ([NFSAM 519](#)).
- 5) All compliance reviews must be completed no later than November 15th ([NFSAM 518.01](#))
- 6) Food Security Act – See attached Quality Control Plan
- 7) Limited Resource Farmers who self certify for EQIP in order to obtain 90% cost sharing, will be required to provide their last two years tax returns to verify that they meet the income requirements and that farm sales did not exceed the maximum allowed amount. District Conservationists will verify certification before the applicant signs a contract.

E. Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPIA) Compliance

In compliance with the IPIA, NRCS in West Virginia will annually review programs that may be susceptible to significant improper payments. The Office of Management and

Budget has determined that Farm Bill programs will be considered high risk and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer has coded the programs into five color groups. Each group requires a different level of data interrogation and reporting. Appropriate staff will complete the reviews according to instructions in the memo dated March 2, 2005 which was signed by P. Dwight Holman, Deputy Chief for Management.

Risk Color Group Red:

Red programs require a statistical sampling of transactions. Identified transactions include

Program	FMD Control Numbers	Person	Date Due	Date Completed
EQIP	42125, 47640, 48415, 64554	ASTC-P, SAO	March 17, 2006	
FRPP	75, 133, 142, 175,	ASTC-FO E., SAO	March 17, 2006	
WHIP	143, 1167, 1492, 1648, 2043	ASTC-P, SAO	March 17, 2006	

Risk Color Group Black and Orange:

Black and Orange programs require a judgmental sample. Conservation Technical Assistance is the only designated black program. Black programs require more in-depth internal control risk assessment and may require more transaction testing. At least one transaction from each of the following Orange Programs will be reviewed. NRCS State Office will select transactions to review.

Program	Color	FMD Control Numbers	Person	Date Due	Date Completed
CTA	Black		ASTC-O, SAO	March 17, 2006	
EWP	Orange		ASTC-WR, SAO	March 17, 2006	
Small Watersheds Authorized by PL-566	Orange		ASTC-WR, SAO	March 17, 2006	
Technical Assistance component for WRP, EQIP(Base, GSWC), CRP, GRP, FRPP, and WHIP	Orange		ASTC-P, SRC, SAO, ASTC-FO E	March 17, 2006	

F. Soil Survey Program

It is the function of MLRA Region 13 (MO-13) Office to ensure the quality of soil classification and correlation by reviewing the quality of soil survey mapping and digitization. The MO-13 Office is responsible for all phases of quality control in the production and maintenance of soil surveys.

FY2006 Action Plan for the Soil Survey Program

Action	Who	Completion Date
1.) Conduct MO-13 Schedule of Soil Survey Appraisals	MO-13 Leader	
2.) Technical Soil Services	SSS	
a.) Review Web based Section II of the FOTG	SSS, SRC	
b.) Review Soil Survey support of Toolkit Implementation	SSS	
c.) Review TSS Program Plan (PRS)	SSS	

G. Implement Management Action Plan items.

H. Special Reviews as State operations and program needs dictate will be completed. See appendix.

I. PL534 and PL566 (structural measures) – Structural measures are covered by program requirements (e.g., project agreements, O&M agreements, etc.) A separate quality assurance policy is not required.

J. Mandatory Civil Rights Training will be e-mailed to all employees through USDA Agriculture Learning Service (AgLearn) Web site. This training will be completed by September 30, 2006.

<p align="center">WEST VIRGINIA NRSC FSA/FACTA/FAIRA QUALITY CONTROL PLAN</p> <p align="center">FY 2006</p>

PURPOSE

To provide for a quality assessment of highly erodible land and wetland determinations, conservation planning, practice implementation and contract reviews. This assessment will provide the basis for developing actions to improve the overall quality of The Food Security Act of 1985 and 2002 (FSA), The Food Agriculture Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (FACTA), and Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act 1996 (FAIRA) activities.

OVERVIEW

Quality Assurance control activities concerning FSA/FACTA/FAIRA cover several areas of activity. They are:

- 1) Contract reviews of farmer compliance with conservation plans. Field office staff will conduct contract reviews on tracts randomly selected by the national office. ([NFSAM Part 518](#))
- 2) Conduct quality review of random sample of tracts during Field Office Reviews
- 3) With US Army Corps of Engineers, monitor and review wetland determinations and delineation ([NFSAM Part 518.](#))

The Assistant State Conservationist - Operations (ASTC-O) is assigned program management responsibilities for FSA/FACTA/FAIRA activities and provides staff assistance and training opportunities. The ASTC-O is responsible for assuring that all activities including quality control are carried out in accordance with the NFSAM. The STC will assign FSA/FACTA/FAIRA responsibilities in writing.

Action: HELC/Wetlands Compliance Reviews	Person:	Completion Date:
A. Contract Reviews and Quality Reviews (NFSAM Part 518)	ASTC-O	
1. Maintain tracking system for maintaining records of contract reviews and quality reviews	ASTC-O	
2. Provide NHQ randomly selected tract numbers to field offices	ASTC-O	
3. Adjust contract review list to include: a) tract owned or operated by USDA employee b) tracts added due to prior year variances c) tracts added due to a reinstatement requested, tract referred by another USDA agency, whistleblowers, potential violations observed by NRCS, or other additions d) FSA Farm Credit Borrowers – 5%	District Conservationists	

4. Determine if additional staff is needed to conduct review where conflict of interest exists and request assignment of tract by ASTC.	ASTC-FO (all)	
5. Schedule and Conduct Contract Reviews	District Conservationists	
6. Document Contract Reviews	District Conservationists	
7. Determine appropriate action for Not Actively Applying and Wetland Conservation Violations	District Conservationists	
8. Evaluate contract reviews results to determine if additional review(s) are necessary (NFSAM 518.03)	ASTC-O, SRC	
9. Complete quality review of random contract reviews as well as additional tracts deemed necessary by STC including all new activity on NRCS employee-owned/operated land having current year activity, including positive and/or negative determinations. (NFSAM 519.)	ASTC-O	
B. State Office Review of HELC/WC in field offices [Special Review]	ASTC-O	

Appendix 1 – NFSAM References

COMPLIANCE REVIEWS

[NFSAM, PART 518](#)

GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWS

[NFSAM 519.02](#)

PROCEDURE TO ASSURE THAT “NOT ACTIVELY APPLYING” DETERMINATIONS
MADE DURING QUALITY REVIEWS HAVE FSA-569 ISSUED

[NFSAM 518.12](#)

GUIDANCE ON DELGATION AND USE OF STATUS REVIEW VARIANCES

[NFSAM Part 520 Subpart B](#)

GUIDANCE ON SERVING APPEALS, COMPLAINTS, AND POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS

[NFSAM 510.02](#)

ANNUALLY UPDATED LIST OF EMPLOYEES WHO OWN OR OPERATE FARMS
SUBJECT TO 1985 ACT AS AMENDED

[NFSAM 518.03](#)

Appendix 2 – Other References

GUIDANCE ON FOIA/PRIVACY ACT

[GENERAL MANUAL 120 ADS PART 408, SUBPART C](#)

GUIDANCE ON SERVING APPEALS, COMPLAINTS, AND POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS

[Conservation Program Manual Part 510](#)

DOCUMENTATION, CERTIFICATION AND SPOT CHECKING

[GENERAL MANUAL 450 TCH PART 407; WV Amendment #4](#)

Appendix 3 – Special Reviews

Throughout the year, the State Conservationist, with input from Principle Staff and results of Oversight and Evaluation reviews, will determine the need for special reviews related to quality assurance.

- a) Quality control will be carried out to assure that progress reported in the Performance Results Recording System (PRS) is consistent in the state, and that progress is consistent with the FOTG. Each ASTC-FO will review Field Office reporting in PRS during office visits. Reviews can also be carried out in conjunction with other Quality Assurance Reviews, such as spot checks and appraisals. (ASTC-O, ASTC-P, and ASTC-FO).

Appendix 4 –Forms

Forms are located on the NRCS website at <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/wvforms.html>:

- a) [Quality Assurance Review \(WV-180-3\)](#)
- b) [Engineering Spot Check Report \(WV-180-5\)](#)
- c) [WRP Monitoring Checklist](#)
- d) Contract Review [NRCS-CPA-13](#)
- e) FSA Quality Review Sheet (WV-CPA-10)